

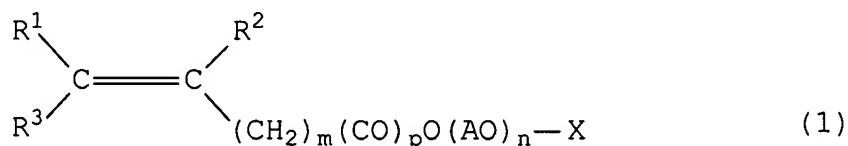
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

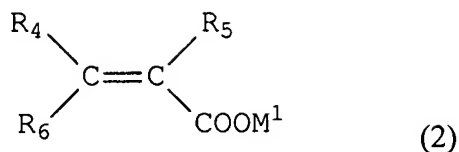
1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of dispersing a hydraulic composition, said method comprising adding a powdery dispersant to the hydraulic composition;

wherein said powdery dispersant comprises at least one copolymer as a powder, wherein said copolymer is made by polymerizing at least one vinyl monomer (a) represented by the formula (1):



wherein R^1 and R^2 represent a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or $-\text{COO}(\text{AO})_n\text{X}$, m is a number of 0 to 2, p is a number of 0 or 1, AO represents a C_{2-4} oxyalkylene group or an oxystyrene group, n is the average mole number of AO groups and is a number of 2 to 300, and X represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-18} alkyl group;

with at least one vinyl monomer (b) represented by the formula (2):



wherein R^4 , R^5 and R^6 are the same as or different from one another and each represent a hydrogen atom, a methyl group or $-(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ wherein $-(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ is optionally combined with $-\text{COOM}^1$ or another $-(\text{CH}_2)_{m_1}\text{COOM}^2$ to produce an anhydride so that M^1 and M^2 of these groups are not present, each of M^1 and M^2 represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent metal, and m_1 is a number of 0 to 2,

wherein the average mole number of C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 50 to 150;

$(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 15 to 45 (mole%); and

at least part of the ~~copolymers~~ copolymer is a monovalent metal salt, salt; and a degree of neutralization of 50% to 90%.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the average mole number of C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 70 to 115.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein $(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 20 to 45 mole%.

4. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the powdery dispersant comprises the copolymer made from starting monomers that are 98 to 100 % by weight of the monomers (a) and (b).

5. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein said powdery dispersant comprises 50 to 100 % by weight of dispersant particles whose diameter is 500 μm or less.

6. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the average mole number of the C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 70 to 100.

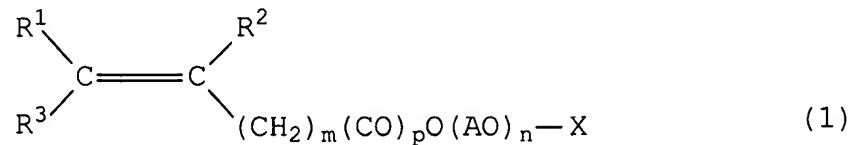
7. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one vinyl monomer (b) is selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylic acid, a salt thereof and maleic anhydride.

8. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein said monovalent metal salt is an alkali metal salt.

9. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8, wherein said monovalent metal salt is ~~an alkali metal salt.~~ sodium.

10. **(Currently Amended)** A method of ~~using~~ mixing a powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition, said method comprising mixing the powdery dispersant with the hydraulic composition, wherein said powdery dispersant ~~comprising~~ comprises at least one

copolymer, wherein said copolymer is made by polymerizing at least one vinyl monomer (a) represented by the formula (1):



wherein R^1 and R^2 represent a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or $-\text{COO}(\text{AO})_n\text{X}$, m is a number of 0 to 2, p is a number of 0 or 1, AO represents a C_{2-4} oxyalkylene group or an oxystyrene group, n is the average mole number of AO groups and is a number of 2 to 300, and X represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-18} alkyl group;

with at least one vinyl monomer (b) selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of acrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of methacrylic acid and maleic anhydride;

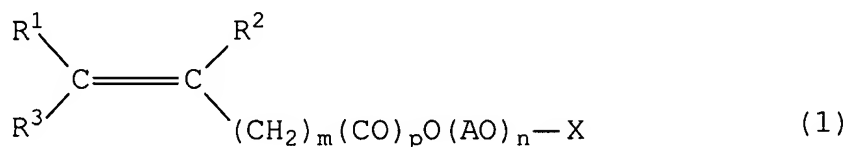
wherein the average mole number of C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is ~~45~~ 50 to 150;

$(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 15 to 45 (mole%); and

at least part of the copolymer is ~~a-alkaline-earth~~ an alkali metal salt; salt; and a degree of neutralization of 50% to 90%.

11. **(Currently Amended)** A method of dispersing mortar with a powdery dispersant for a hydraulic composition, said method comprising dispersing said mortar with the powdery dispersant for the hydraulic composition.

said powdery dispersant comprising at least one copolymer, wherein said copolymer is made by polymerizing at least one vinyl monomer (a) represented by the formula (1):



wherein R^1 and R^2 represent a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or $-\text{COO}(\text{AO})_n\text{X}$, m is a number of 0 to 2, p is a number of 0 or 1, AO represents a C_{2-4} oxyalkylene group or an oxystyrene group, n is the average mole number of AO groups and is a number of 2 to 300, and X represents a hydrogen atom or a C_{1-18} alkyl group;

with at least one vinyl monomer (b) selected from the group consisting of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of acrylic acid, an alkaline earth metal salt of methacrylic acid and maleic anhydride;

wherein the average mole number of C_{2-4} oxyalkylene groups or oxystyrene groups of said copolymer is 45 50 to 150;

$(a)/[(a) + (b)] \times 100$ ranges from 15 to 45 (mole%); and

at least part of the copolymer is ~~a alkaline earth~~ an alkali metal salt; salt; and a degree of neutralization of 50% to 90%.

12. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein after making the copolymer by polymerization, the copolymer is subjected to a step of powdering to give the copolymer powder.

13. (New) The method according to claim 12, wherein the powdering step is carried out without any carrier.

14. (New) The method according to claim 12, wherein the powdering step is carried out by a spray drying method or a film drying method.